

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TOKYO 14741 121125Z

10

ACTION EA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5950

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CINCPAC HONOLULU I

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14741

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: TANAKA'S CABINET RESHUFFLE APPRAISED

REF: (A) TOKYO 14672

(B) TOKYO 14730

SUMMARY: NEW TANAKA CABINET SEEN AS EFFORT BY TANAKA TO BOLSTER HIS LEADERSHIP POSITON. ATTEMPT TO CREATE ALL-FACTION UNITY CABINET WAS UNSUCCESSFUL OWING TO REFUSAL OF FUKUDA, MIKI, SHIINA, AND MIZUTA TO COOPERATE. OBSERVERS FORESEE DIFFICULTIES FOR TANAKA AS CONSEQUENCE OF WIDENED CLEAVAGE BETWEEN LDP MAINSTREAM AND INTRAPARTY OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. TANAKA'S NOVEMBER 11 RESHUFFLE OF HIS CABINET AND KEY PARTY POSTS WAS A BOLD EFFORT TO BOLSTER HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER SHARP ATTACK FROM BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE LDP SINCE THE BUNGEI SHUNJU MAGAZINE'S EXPOSE LAST MONTH OF HIS PERSONAL FINANCIAL DEALINGS. WHILE HE HAD THE CHOICE OF WAITING UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT, TANAKA APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT IT WAS BETTER TACTICS TO ACT SWIFTLY AND DECISEVELY TO SHOW THAT HE WAS STILL IN COMAND OF THE SITUATION, DESPITE  
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 14741 121125Z

DISSIDENCE WITHIN HIS PARTY, EXTREMELY UNFAVORABLE POPULARITY

POLLS, AND HOSTILE PRESS TREATMENT. IN EXPLAINING HIS RESHUFFLE, TANAKA STATED HE WAS HOPING TO PUT TOGETHER A STRONG, NEW TEAM TO UNIFY THE PARTY AND TO COPE WITH INFLATION AND MANY OTHER OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. TO MANY OF HIS CRITICS, HOWEVER, THE EFFORT HAS SUCCEEDED ONLY IN WIDENING THE INTRA-PARTY CLEAVAGE AND SHORTENED RATHER THAN PROLONGED THE LIFE OF THE TANAKA GOVERNMENT.

2. IN TERMS OF FACTIONAL BALANCE AND AVERAGE AGE, THE NEW TANAKA CABINET DIFFERS VERY LITTLE FROM ITS PREDECESSOR WHICH CAME INTO BEING FOUR MONTHS AGO AFTER FUKUDA AND MIKI AND SHIGERU HORI LEFT THE GOVERNMENT. WITH ALL THE KEY PORTFOLIOS HELD BY THE TANAKA, OHIRA AND NAKASONE FACTIONS, THE REVAMPED CABINET IS ESSENTIALLY BUILT AROUND THE THREE MAINSTREAM GROUPS WITH TOKEN REPRESENTATION BY FOLLOWERS OF MIKI AND FUKUDA. DESPITE TANAKA'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING HIS INTENTION TO BRING YOUNGER BLOOD INTO HIS GOVERNMENT, THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE NEW CABINET IS 62.9 YEARS, ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE AVERAGE 62.7 YEARS OF ITS PREDECESSOR.

3. ALTHOUGH TANAKA REPORTEDLY TRIED TO PUT TOGETHER A UNITY CABINET, HE FAILED TO WIN THE COOPERATION OF FUKUDA AND MIKI WHO WERE OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF AN EARLY RESHUFFLE AND REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS FORMATION BY SUBMITTING THEIR CANDIDATES. WHILE THIS MAY HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED, THE FACT THAT LDP VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA AND FORMER FINANCE MINISTER MIZUTA, BOTH HEADS OF IMPORTANT MINOR FACTIONS, ALSO REFUSED TO COOPERATE WAS A SERIOUS SETBACK WHICH WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE REPORTED TURNDOWN OF A CABINET POST BY SHIGERU HORI, LEADER OF AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF THE FUKUDA FACTION. THUS, DESPITE THE NOMINAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW CABINET BY INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED WITH THE FUKUDA/MIKI AND SHIINA/MIZUTA FACTIONS, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACT ABOUT THE NEW LINEUP IS THAT IT SHARPLY DIVIDES THE PARTY AT A TIME WHEN TANAKA'S LEADERSHIP FACES A MAJOR TRIAL.

4. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, OBSERVERS ARE AGREED -- AND FUKUDA HAS MADE THIS EXPLICIT -- THE INTRA-LDP TRUCE WILL BE MAINTAINED UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT. IT IS ALSO THE CONSENSUS THAT WITH THE CONVENING OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY DIET SESSION EXPECTED NOW TO TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 14741 121125Z

NOVEMBER, THE TANAKA GOVERNMENT WILL AT BEST HAVE A HARD SCRAMBLE TO STAY IN POWER. WE THINK THE PRESSURE STILL BUILDING IS IMPRESSIVE, THE ODDS FAVORING TANAKA'S DEMISE ARE GROWING. PREDICTIONS OF A CLIMAX IN EARLY DECEMBER DURING THE COMING EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION MAY STILL BE PRE-MATURE, BUT A LIFE EXPECTANCY MUCH INTO THE NEW YEAR IS GETTING INCREASEINGLY DOUBTFUL.  
HODGSON

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